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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Afghans Now Control Power Plant

Handover ceremony recognizes Afghan excellence in the energy sector



Photo: USAID/AIRP

U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry (right) is joined by the Minister of Economy and a power plant operator to cut the ribbon as the Tarakhil Power Plant is transferred from the American to the Afghan people.

The power plant will provide approximately 150 permanent jobs supporting plant operations, including station managers, plant operators, maintenance personnel, trainees, administrative staff, and security personnel.

Culminating three years of construction and intensive capacity building, on June 27, the U.S. Government handed over to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan the 105-megawatt Tarakhil Power Plant in Kabul, a state-of-the-art thermal facility consisting of 18 medium-speed diesel engines. It can serve more than half a million residents at peak periods and can back up the country's North East Power System.

Flanked by prominent Afghan ministers and accompanied by USAID Mission Director Earl Gast, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry called the transfer another example of America's commitment to Afghanistan's development. "I am deeply honored to represent the American people to celebrate the success of extending power to 600,000 men, women, and children," Ambassador Eikenberry said. "The transfer of this highly efficient power plant to the Government of Afghanistan increases access to energy and affects everything the Afghan Government wants to achieve for its people."

Media outlets and numerous officials gathered on the grounds of the plant, located approximately 20 kilometers outside of Kabul, to recognize the extraordinary contributions of USAID, implementing partners, and the national energy utility Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat to the achievement.

"I want to thank the international community, especially the United States," said Acting Minister of Energy and Water Ismail Khan. "Three years ago Kabul only had two or three hours of electricity a few nights a week, but today we have electricity 24 hours per day."

Ambassador Eikenberry singled out for special recognition the plant's Afghan operators, dressed in colorful jumpsuits. They will assume management of the plant and help Afghanistan to meet its goals of self-reliance and businesslike performance in the energy sector. "These fine young people in green, blue, and orange are the future of Afghanistan and the reason for hope and confidence," the Ambassador said.

The plant joins the growing network of USAID-sponsored energy initiatives that have improved electric service in urban and rural areas, such as providing electricity to Kandahar and Hilmand provinces through the rehabilitation of the Kajaki Dam hydropower plant.